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ABSTRACT

The paper presents 24 suggestions for the employment of mentally handicapped individuals. Each suggestion is described briefly and considerations or actions are posed as applicable. Among opportunities listed are free labor market status plus additional support, selective placement, quota system (requiring a percentage of those hired be handicapped), subsidized on the job training, cottage or home industries, subsidized enterprise, employer incentive schemes, and sheltered workshops. The issue of sheltered workshops is discussed in greater detail with exploration of such features and problems as selecting leadership, integrating services with other handicapped groups, and planning the program to include expansion and change. An overview of some rehabilitation programs in England, the United States, Poland, and Costa Rica is provided to demonstrate what has been done. (PHR)

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THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOCIALIZATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

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by Dr. George Soloyanis

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I have changed the title of my assignment to reflect my belief that sheltered employment should never be discussed apart from a general context of activities appropriate and necessary for retarded people. I prefer to deal with "The role of employment" or "economic activities" for retarded people, under which sheltered employment or accomodated employment or sheltered workshops may have a prominent role. I am trying to avoid reinforcing stereotyped thinking which suggests that the best and most comprehensive programmes for retarded persons consist primarily of special education or training, then placement into a sheltered workshop.

I am assuming that your concerns are for all of the retarded people in your country, not just for the ones you happen to see or to know. An easy assumption is that your resources are limited and that you wish the highest, the most longlasting, the most stable benefit for the most.

Therefore, in order to assist you with your planning, I have identified twenty-four economic activities, not only suitable for retarded persons, but which are now being undertaken somewhere in the world, and not necessarily in the industrialized world. Dr. Molly Thorburn, Mr. Neufeld, Mr. Leslie, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Marc Gold, and others have alluded to some of these activities elsewhere on your programme.

I identify so many models in order to demonstrate that there is no one preferred way, that you cannot really copy someone else's way, and in order to begin to show how important to the employment models you may choose your unique socio-cultural, political, and economic environment is, and to suggest that many times the highest benefits to mentally retarded persons will result from efforts to modify those environments, rather than from efforts to provide direct services yourselves. My second motive is to stimulate you to add still other types of economic activities to the list presented here today.

Although we can trace at least in the United States the origins of special or sheltered employment for handicapped people back 130 years (which began with the blind), it is only within the last approximately ten years that the population of mentally retarded persons has entered into any kind of significant employment. It has been very difficult to overcome the many, many barriers that societies have erected against this category of handicapped and it was even harder to dismantle the many barriers, mechanisms and institutions which impeded access to the relatively free world for the mentally retarded. Many, factors come into play. The retarded person is living longer and something has to be done with him over a longer period of time. There has, to some extent arisen a disgust with longterm institutionalization as a final solution for retarded persons for many reasons which the scope of our meeting cannot cover. There has been a spectacular growth of special education resources and programmes. We have seen the arousal of national, political and social sensitivities. We have seen especially the growth of Rights Movements and probably best of all we have seen success in programming. We know that retarded persons can learn, we know that they can work, and we know that many of them, if they are not damaged by our systems of help, can lead very close to independent lives. We know that they can generally equal the activities of other handicapped groups, given proper support, shelter or accomodation.

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Paper presented at the I.L.O/DANIDA Seminar on Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded -Jamaica, September 4 - 15, 1978.

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For those of us here who are professionals or leaders, it should be obvious that before selecting a particular series of economic activities to promote for the mentally retarded, that we gain a thorough understanding of the total national social system in which we wish to establish better things for the handicapped. We must understand the economic and manpower systems, such matters as the infrastructure concerned with vocational training, special education, job placement efforts, employment prospects, rates of economic growth, and the directions of economic growth, and so on. Above all, we must know the political process, and obtain access to it.

It does not matter that some of these things are unfamiliar to some of us, or that we may not know how to proceed at this time. In our zeal and dedication to the provision of concrete direct services to some handicapped, many of us ignore paying attention to the political aspects of our leadership.

For example, many of us have visited workshops and other rehabilitation programmes, or we may have read extensively, or some very expert practitioners may have visited with us, and they showed us how to do something. Under such circumstances without any other consideration, it seems that we have only to choose a model of services that we like, or that everybody says we should have, or that seems feasible, and then figure out a way to pay for it. When we do this, most frequently we succeed in establishing a "charitable enclave", usually very small, very limited, with a static population. Certainly things can be copies by groups of determined leaders but without a consideration of the political and cultural context, such copies remain imports, and they always need artificial respiration.

Let us now consider 24 ways of providing economic opportunities for mentally retarded persons which are now being used somewhere in the world.

1. Free labour market status:

Here we expect to take a mentally retarded person, train him in some occupation which is in demand, then we expect him to apply for a job and to be employable on his own merits. There may be some additional help needed, just as we might provide for any other young adult, such as job counselling, help in learning where the jobs are, and the usual matters attendant to a successful application. The free labour market status is usually at the top of any hierarchy of outcomes which we have considered to be most desirable.

Considerations or actions:

a. Does the national vocational training system or other accept and accomodate mentally retarded persons so that they can acquire marketable skills?

b. What employer attitudes may need changing - what community bias must be worked on?

c. Is there a pool of trained retarded persons available for immediate employment?

d. Do you believe they can make it in open employment?

2. Free Market Labour status plus additional support

Some otherwise well trained retarded persons may have difficulty getting to the place of work, others may need supportive counselling from time to time, still others may need protective or special housing arrangements. Basically, we expect persons in this status to go to work but to use these special support services so long as they are necessary.

Considerations or actions:

a. Which is more reasonable or economical to transport five persons to and from their jobs, or to put them, into a sheltered workshop?

b. Is there a group home or a foster home or a boarding home that can be made available?

3. Selective Placement

This is a well practiced procedure where a placement officer or rehabilitation counsellor finds jobs that they know a retarded person can do, already existing jobs. The task of the counsellor is to point this out to the employer and to assist the employer in the hiring of the retarded person. Selective placement is something that we do in order to find that special or right kind of job for our people.

Considerations or actions:

a. Are the national or business placement agencies practicing selective placement?

b. What can your agency do to improve the situation?

4. Selective placement plus accomodation

Sometimes, in addition to finding the right job for the right person, we may have to modify the job to make it more right. Obviously, such a process implies at least a willingness on the part of prospective employers to experiment.

Job modification or accomodation has been used extensively for physically handicapped workers and for retarded persons. A job may be structures in a way that makes it difficult for a retarded person to produce, and the task is to assist the employer in modifying the job without unnecessary loss in productivity, with out increasing the cost unreasonably so that the handicapped person can apply himself.

Some accomodations that may be made are job sharing, where two persons share one job, or flexi-time, or part-time work and so on.

Considerations or actions:

a. Where should the responsibility for such a process be located?

b. Can we secure the necessary skills to do it?

5. Self-Employment

6. Enclaves, public or private:

In an enclave, an employer will usually ser aside a place within his establishment and may or may not especially equip it for the productive efforts of the mentally retarded person. Usually one might need some additional supervision which may or may not be supplied by the rehabilitation centre. It has the advantage of placing the retarded person in a realistic production oriented facility, and affording him the extra stimulation which is available. Clearly, much negotiation with prospective employers is necessary.

Considerations or actions:

a. It is better to provide the workshop in someone else's place, giving only supervision.

b. What will it take to persuade some enterprise to try it?

7. Work Crew

A work crew may work in an enclave, or move from job to job, usually providing a service. What is sold is the output of the crew, not that of any individual member. Usually has an able supervisor provided by the rehabilitation centre, which also provides tools, supplies, transportation, etc. work can be anything that a group can be trained to do.

The advantages are that even minimally productive workers can be used and perhaps stimulated, it provides changing environments co-operation can be learned, and the need for buildings and fixed equipment can be minimized.

Considerations or actions:

a. What kind of economic opportunities exist for such work crews, and can we compete for the work?

b. Who will organize it?

8. Subsidized on the job training

OJT is a method used to prepare handicapped persons, such as the mentally retarded for specific jobs with a specific employer, agency, business, or other. The rehabilitation centre may subsidize through the payment of training wages and other costs the training of mentally retarded person in actual industry, agency or corporation jobs. The potential employer usually contributes space, machinery, overhead costs, etc.

In addition to receiving realistic training and try-outs, trainees are able to demonstrate to the co-operation employer their ability as an trainees are better trained than general job applicants. We do expect graduates of OJT programmes to be ultimately employed at the training facility.

Other advantages are the elimination of costly investment by the rehabilitation facility in training equipment, the elimination of a general job search for their trainees, and the additional resources provided by co-operating agencies.

Considerations or actions:

a. Are there industries, businesses, farms, or other large employers who can be approached?

9. Workshops without walls

Here we have a work situation where the jobs or job stations are in community agencies, industries and businesses. With the work stations in realistic settings, the transition to a real job is made much easier.

Industries or businesses agree to provide settings for training. A general evaluation and work adjustment can take place in the workshop, thereafter specific job skill training, later job placement and try-out, employment, and follow-up.

In a workshop, sheltered or otherwise, which admits mentally retarded persons with some potential for good productive work, will eliminates the need for costly training equipment and machinery, and for further capital investment in large buildings. Instead funds are invested in developing the job stations outside, and in necessary supervision.

Considerations or actions:

a. How many retarded persons are employed by your agency or are being trained in real life job stations?

10. Projects with industry

The manner in which Goodwill Industry is handling these projects should be of interest. Once a project is planned and announced a community governing committee is formed made up of the top employer executives in that community. They, the employers, advise the workshop about the jobs in the community, what training is needed, what changes are taking place, etc. Eventually they form smaller committees to plan the training for their own industries. These voluntary committees are given staff support by the local workshop.

Wasteful training, i.e., for obsolete jobs, is eliminated, and valuable employer contacts are maintained. the potential employer becomes directly involved with handicapped persons, and his administrative and executive experience can be tapped.

Considerations or actions:

a. PWI can also be a valuable community public relations programme.

11. Co-operatives

Certainly co-operatives are a long established system of mutual benefit for its members. In economic of high unemployment, they may furnish the best available econo.nic organization for the handicapped. There are many instances of handicapped persons admittedly mostly physically handicapped, who have formed themselves into co-operatives for the purpose of conducting economic activities.

I believe that co-operatives are especially adaptible to mixed groups of handicapped people, accomodating the blind, the deaf, physically handicapped and mentally impaired, allowing the strengths of some to compensate for the lacks of others.

It may require much planning to get a compatible mix, and the training must include many organizational and business skills.

Considerations or actions:

a. Are there any co-operatives in your country whose experience can be studied?

12. Pre-cooperatives

In some Latin American countries especially Columbia, they are experimenting with several groups of pre-cooperatives. Some rehabilitation leaders feels that it takes a great deal of time to establish true independenent co-operatives, and for many severely handicapped persons, a long training or trial period would be necessary. Pre-cooperatives will have a master or patron or non-handicapped leader whos sets about the task of establishing the cooperative, taking as much as five years. The pre-cooperative naturally begins to engage in economic activity as soon as possible and one expects the economic subsidy it receives to diminish over time.

13. Quota System

A number of European countries have enacted legislation mandating that private industry hire one percent or five percent or some percentage of handicapped persons, including the mentally retarded. It becomes the responsibility of the rehabilitation leaders to provide appropriately trained and ready handicapped people. Most observers comment that this system has not worked too well, that employers prefer to pay the penalty, and that enforcement of the laws is practically non-existent.

Considerations or actions:

a. Although quota system are currently not in favour in highly developed countries, might they succeed elsewhere?

14. Social Employment

In times of economic distress, or to favour a privileged group, or to carry out a national social goal, governments have been known to create jobs for large groups of people. Usually useful works is performed and the retarded person may gain some very worthwhile experience which can be used later.

Considerations or actions:

a. Do the national goals of your country includes such social concerns?

b. If not, can these goals be amended?

15. Priority Employment

Certain jobs are sometimes ser aside for designated groups such as war veterans or the handicapped. In egypt, for example, one found handicapped war veterans monitoring street parking, and in the United States, when a new federal building is opened, for certain jobs, absolute priority is given to candidates from the local rehabilitation agencies.

Considerations or actions:

a. Are there such jobs in your country that can be reserved for mentally retarded persons?

16. Accomodated Business

In some countries, the blind are permitted to open shops or kiosks in sections of government buildings, and they have the exclusive right to do so. For example, in Senegal, the blind are selling national lottery tickets in special kiosks set up in public parks.

Considerations or actions:

a. What is going on in you country, or can be modified, to accomodate retarded persons?

17. Cottage or Home Industries

This is generally piece work or assembly work which can be done in small groups or in homes, work of very high quality but which may probably be of low total economic value. It imposes the problems of quality control and of course, transportation and communication costs may be quite high. But it may be a very desirable social laternative than to permit home-bound retarded persons to stagnate.

Considerations and actions:

a. If you are planning sheltered workshop which will need to be subsidized anyway, can you afford to leave the home-bound out?

18. Priority Production Systems

In many countries we are beginning to see some success in government granting of priority in bidding for products which government uses, or in the supply of services, to groups of handicapped persons. These groups can be organized in a wide variety of ways.

In the U.S. and in Poland, handicapped persons benefit greatly from this procedure, and in Chile I have seen a sheltered workshop of mentally retarded young adults doing silk screening of government linen and calendars.

Considerations or actions:

a. What products purchased by your government can be "set aside" for delivery by the handicapped?

19. Private Business

A business can be set up to employ primarily handicapped persons. You can find these in the U. in Mexico, in Ethiopia, and certainly many others. Here the rehabilitation leaders, or some businessmen, or through other auspices, a business enterprise is set up to provide employment for mentally retarded persons. It is a business, must be well organized and competitive, must produce a product or services to be marketed. It is a regular business with the important socially redeeming value of providing work for handicapped persons.

The business can be competitive, with profits going to the members, or the proceeds can be used to offset the cost of other activities for the mentally retarded, such as the sheltered workshop. A plac in Ecuador makes fine house doors for the luxury market, and the proceeds support other sheltered employment.

20. Monopoly Business

In some countries where the state manages most of the economy, as in Poland and similar countri certain economic activities are reserved for the output of handicapped persons including the mentally retarded. Poland, where the enterprises are also co-operatives, is an excellent example.

One can imagine almost any country represented here securing an exclusive license to produce something now being imported, and therefore having a sort of protective enterprise.

A variation of this type of economic activity is the Redflag Pubber and Hardware Company in Peking, administered by the municipality, and serving several categories of handicapped persons. In addition, they have used some of the "accomodations" mentioned previously, using special buses to transport handicapped workers back and forth, and living quarters are provided for 50 disabled workers

21. Subsidized Enterprise

The subsidy is by the government, and the best example that comes to mind is REMPLOY of Grea Britain. REMPLOY factories, large and small, have been established to employ handicapped persons who are otherwise not absorbable in the regular labour market, and they do business just like everybody else, with competitive prices, regular wages, marketing campaigns, and so on. The government subsidizes the system to an agreed level. Close to 9000 people are kept off welfare rolls, they work in dignity and can support their families. Such subsidies may be an economic alternative to direct assistance payments, and the system yields products of value to the national economy.

22. Employer Incentive Schemes

Some communities are thinking of providing various incentives to employers to increase the probability of hiring mentally retarded persons. One can think of a national policy which grants tax

ebates or cash incentives to employers who hire the handicapped. This gives a handicapped person a chance to try out a job, and to learn about it. Of course, one cannot expect an employer to maintain ndefinitely a substandard product, although the incentive, continued over a long range, might permit his.

OJT and similar programmes are also clearly incentive schemes.

3. Activity Centres

These are mentioned here, because sooner or later, all rehabilitation centres, whether they have a heltered workshop or not, must make a decision about the handicapped worker who produces at a rate f 30 percent or less. Or sometimes a sheltered workshop may become an activity centre through lack o conomic activity, or through improper attention to standard production methods, through poor supervi- ion, indifferent attention to task adaptation, and so on.

In activity centres we do not except very significant economic activity and there will need to be other heavy and permanent subsidization. These centres belong in the list of activities which must be onsidered for the socialization of severely handicapped people, and to provide relief for the family. hey are designed to provide stimulating social and educational experiences which at the very least revent mentally retarded persons from stagnating and deteriorating and thus we can avoid subsequent o onger term increased disability and dependency which will lead to greater problems and more expense.

Many experts believe that the same facilities should not house both very low economic producers uch as belong in an activity centre and a work-like activity such as a sheltered workshop.

4. Sheltered Workshop

Following is the definition in the recently revised ILO Glossary:

"Is often, but should not necessarily be, a subsidized establishment which provides sheltered work to disabled persons and which has two primary objectives:

1. to offer transitional or short term employment as work preparation and training for competitive employment;

2. and, to offer long term employment for disabled persons who, because of the severity of their handicap, are unlikely to be able to secure and retain competitive employment.

may provide some or all of the following services: medical and paramedical assistance, vocational evaluation, job guidance and counselling, work adjustment training, and selective placement.

In countries with extensive underemployment or unemployment, sheltered employment may offer opportunities to those disabled persons who might otherwise have not been able to secure competitive ork.

It is important that we define "shelter", and distinguish it from "accomodation". "Accomodation" something done so that an employee can perform at a normal standard; thus a job can be restructured,

transportation to and from work provided, etc. Under "accomodation" jobs or working conditions are modified to meet the needs of workers, rather than the other way round. "Shelter" refers to things which are done which accept some degree of reduced production, and usually directly or indirectly, subsidize the missing production. Thus changing the working hours or way of doing a job is "accomodation", while increasing supervisory time is "shelter".

The activities for mentally retarded persons which I have described previously have either "shelter" or "accomodation", or both, as components.

While the ILO definition suggests the possibility of a wide range of activities, actually, national economic and cultural practice, the existence of other related and collaborative systems dictate the character of a particular sheltered workshop. In the United States you are likely to find a very wide range of activities, whereas the European practice seems to be to provide mainly extended employment. In Peru, and Mexico two sheltered workshops provide only extended employment, a large one in Cost Rica offers mainly vocational training and placement, several workshops in Columbia provide training employment, and pre-cooperatives, and another in Santo Domingo does everything. All are equally considered sheltered workshops, since subsides are required. Some workshops which show a profit are also considered sheltered workshops since some of the income is not earned income.

What can a sheltered workshop do?

Of course, any and all of the activities previously discussed can be part of an overall economic activity programme. You are probably most familiar with subcontracting for the services of a work crew, selling training services, making things and selling them, repairing things and selling them, and a few other things.

No one should tell you what economic activities to undertake. This is a determination that is clearly based upon community leader advice, on the economic and market conditions prevailing, on staff training and administrative skills, and naturally, on the skill level of the workshop clients.

I do know that you should probably not have your clients make handicrafts to be sold one week a year at a church or hospital bazaar. That's charity work, not rehabilitation. Sheltered workshop should be a business, even if it is almost always a losing business.

For and Against Sheltered Workshops

A major assumption I make is that your resources are inadequate to do the job, that you do not have enough trained leaders, enough money, or other support. A second assumption is that you wish to maximize the use of your resources - in the long run.

You have heard and you know that there are many different kinds of economic activities theoretically available to mentally retarded persons, and you know that some kinds are more difficult to achieve than others. We can, however, agree that for some severely retarded persons the only alternative will be a sheltered workshop.

Let me suggest a number of salient features or possible problems which must be addressed:

a. Leadership - You cannot do it alone. It seems that your first task is to broaden the range of skills available to your programme. Does your board have representatives from the government, from the community, from the business or commercial sector? Are you using your skills and knowledge? Are you expanding your team so that concern for mentally retarded persons changes to concern for persons?

b. Size - Is your operation large enough? It is a serious mistake to start too small. Expensive leadership, supervisory skills, other resources, need to be spread over many to be economical. A large workshop or programme can do many things can attract many different resources and can be more interesting. It can allow more room for a wider range of disability.

c. Integration - Should you integrate your services with other handicapped groups? Absolutely YES. It is almost criminal to compete with other groups for meager resources when far richer opportunities can exist with a combination. Are there other programmes, other workshops; If so, then join them.

You will again broads the basis for support by including other groups, and you will win their advocacy.

d. Programme - Did you draw up your building plans before you wrote your programme? What are your clear written objectives? How will these objectives look five years from now? Who is keeping the programme current?

If you are going to manufacture things, does anybody know how to run a factory or a business? If you are going to sell things, where is your marketing specialists?

e. The Token - If you know that there are 1000 mentally retarded persons in your country and if you are providing excellent services in a sheltered workshop for 50 of them, are you really doing anything significant?

Does your sheltered workshop use up most of your leadership talents and other resources leaving little time to do anything else?

Does your community or country believe that because you have a successful workshop that the problem of mental retardation is being solved?

f. The Handicapped - Are you employing handicapped people as staff in good jobs, not only providing work for them within your own organization or realistic training, but providing a good example? Are there any handicapped persons on your governing body?

General Comments

Sheltered workshops are very popular these days and they do provide a very useful activity for severely handicapped people. They offer concrete demonstrations of what can be done, they offer opportunities to train leadership, and to inform the public. No doubt they should be part of every comprehensive programme of assistance to mentally retarded persons.

One can caution, however, the priorities involved in paying so much attention to the severely retarded at the sacrifice of other energy which could be directed to other retarded persons, perhaps activities with a much greater impact. We are not talking about not doing one or the other, surely, but what is the proper balance?

Almost all sheltered workshops lose money, thus will need permanent subsidies. Almot all sheltered workshops pay back benefits to their communities in excess of the deficits, even in developing countries, and we are beginning to have more and more evidence of this fact.

I am suggesting rather strongly that the sheltered workshop which everybody wants to create with its building and staff, may not be the best solution in your country or in your community, and it may, in fact, do a disservice to many, many handicapped people. I think we all ought to consider instead, rather complete systems for exploiting the potential of mentally retarded persons and keeping the sheltered workshop as only one tool in this entire system.

Many of us in many of our countries and communities clearly are limited in our resources and our time and we are hindered by inexperience and the attitudes of others about us. I think that it is important that as we look upon the possible choices for action, that we try to keep in mind something like a cost benefit ratio. Suppose we had $10,000 dollars. What is the best way to use it? Should we build a workshop? Should we send somebody off to school? Should we try to influence the government? I think as you look upon the 24 ways it will be obvious that certain actions, certain activities, will have probably a larger pay-off for the whole population of mentally retarded persons than some other activities which might be quite discreet.

What I am trying to suggest is that many of us need to raise our eyes and exercise the kind of leadership which will truly prepare our countries and our communities for the economic participation of the mentally retarded. I'm not so sure that a successful sheltered workshop is the best way to do this. True we do need demonstrations and we do need pilots and we do need to have something concrete to show somebody what can be done and I'm not saying that we shouldn't do these things; but I'm saying that we cannot rest with these things and at least part of our energy, part of our resources must be applied at the national level.

The successful rehabilitation programmes in England, in the United States, in Costa Rica, and in other places did not actually come about because somebody started a successful workshop. Every history will show that only when organized groups, be they professionals, in most cases they were parents when they became organized and when thry were able to sensitize their governments and their communities and their professionals in the existing systems to the national needs that existed, it was only the that decent well funded, high quality, large programmes were possible. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of a continuing significant relationship with government ministries and with government political leaders, if in fact you wish accomplish employment for the mentally retarded. Let me give you a brief review of different systems in different countries and illustrate what I'm trying to say about political and social actions. Sweden for example, basic concern for the handicapped is a matter of national economic policy. In Sweden they believe that everyone who wants to work should work and they are doing a great deal to make sure that the handicapped have their economic opportunities. Now I know you can't do this kind of thing maybe in some country or in your country, and I say this merely to illustrate the relationship between successful national programmes of rehabilitation and government priorities and philosophies. If the governmental priorities and I'm talking about our governments, are not sufficiently correct, they will not change automatically, they will not change spontaneously, it will be up to us who are the leaders to help bring about these changes.

In the United States the vast proliferation of facilities for the mentally retarded is a matter of right and a matter of politics. Our national conscience has been pricked and sometimes badly damaged by a series of judicial actions which are possible in our culture which may not be possible in yours. By a heightening of national awareness of how we have been treating handicapped people there is little question anymore but that mentally retarded persons have a right to their share of national resources.

In Costa Rica, rehabilitation of the handicapped is a matter of manpower necessity. There is hardly any unemployment in Costa Rica and our Goodwill affiliate in San José places practically everyone of their graduates. Of course, right now they are dealing with not so severely handicapped persons and there is beginning a pile up of those who are not immediately placeable in some of these good jobs, but I think they will have little difficulty in securing governmental adjustments to accomodate their continued support of the more severely handicapped.

In Poland, for another example, it is a matter of social policy that all citizens participate in economic life as equally as possible. Therefore, in a managed economy such as Poland it is very easy for the government to grant a monopoly on the production of certain essential goods and services. Too, they happen to be co-operatives which produce these same goods and services; for example, I believe that all office supplies among many other things, in Poland are produced only by the handicapped and nobody else can do it. Concomitantly with this, whatever it takes to bring a handicapped person to economic productivity such as training, evaluation, counselling, etc., is freely engaged in by agencies of that government.

We have all heard questions about the wisdom of giving subsidy or making investments for handicapped persons in developing countries where unemployment may be high for the able. Sometimes our response has been a little defensive and has caused our work to take on a charitable character, instead of being truely developmental.

The critics have said that we can only give a low priority to your rehabilitation programmes. We have to wait until the country is more developed and we can afford it. This is a very dangerous philosophy and we should take care to combat it every time it appears. The implication is that only the able bodied and intelligent have value (and you had better believe that all of us here are only temporarily able-bodied) in our country. But, if we really wait until all able people have jobs and then permit the handicapped to be citizens, what kind of a society will we have created?

By our inattention, we will have continued to destroy a whole population of fellow citizens, we will have polarized attitudes, and erected a vast experimental barrier impossible to overcome.

We must insist upon the citizenship and value of everyone of us, handicapped or otherwise; we must insist whatever the form of society that mentally retarded people are part of that society. They have a right to full participation and they cannot wait. We must try to avoid programmes which may continue to segregate and stigmatize the mentally retarded person.

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